

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 032185

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, KN, CH, US

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR ANAN'S INTERVIEW WITH DANA SCHMIDT

REF: BANGKOK 2431

1. HERewith, FULL TEXT CSM FEBRUARY 6 ARTICLE BY DANA SCHMIDT, TITLED "THAIS EXTEND HAND TO NORTH KOREA, CHINA", SUB TITLE "ENVOY HINTS US MAY BE ASKED TO LEAVE..."

BEGIN TEXT: THAILAND, MAIN BASE OF THE US AIR FORCE IN THE FAR EAST, MAY SOON ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA, AND EVEN PERHAPS WITH PEKING.

SO INDICATES THE THAI AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON, ANAND PANYARACVUN, IN AN UNUSUAL INTERVIEW HERE. THE AMBASSADOR ACCOMPANIED A TRADE MISSION TO PYONGYANG, CAPITAL OF NORTH KOREA, AND TO PEKING, IN DECEMBER.

CALL FOR WITHDRAWAL HINTED
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ALSO IN THE INTERVIEW, IN AN APPARENT BUT VEILED REFERENCE TO CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO MORE US MILITARY AID FOR SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA, THE AMBASSADOR OPENED THE DOOR

TO A POSSIBLE FUTURE REQUEST TO THE US AIR FORCE TO WITHDRAW ITS 27,000 MEN FROM A NETWORK OF BASES IN THAILAND.

SUCH A REQUEST COULD COME, HE INDICATED, IF IT SHOULD EVER BECOME APPARENT THAT THE US NO LONGER SUPPORTED SAIGON OR PHNOM PENH.

"THE NORTH KOREANS ASKED US TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS," HE SAID, "AND IT WILL BE UP TO THE NEW THAI GOVERNMENT, NOW BEING FORMED IN BANGKOK, TO MAKE THAT POLITICAL DECISION."

THE CHINESE WERE APPARENTLY MORE CIRCUMSPECT; THAILAND, LIKE THE US, STILL OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZES TAIWAN AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CHINA.

CHINESE CORDIALITY

THE AMBASSADOR SAID THE CHINESE SHOWED GREAT CORDIALITY TO THE THAI DELEGATION, WHICH WAS OSTENSIBLY A "PEOPLE TO PEOPLE" MISSION. IT WAS HEADED BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, BUT INCLUDED THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMERCE OF THAILAND AS WELL AS THE AMBASSADOR.

THE NEW THAI GOVERNMENT IS BEING FORMED FOLLOWING ELECTIONS BASED ON A NEW CONSTITUTION PROMULGATED SIX MONTHS AGO AS RESULT OF THE STUDENTS' REBELLION OF OCTOBER, 1973. AFTER YEARS OF MILITARY RULE, GOING BACK TO 1953, THE ELECTIONS ESTABLISHED THAILAND AS A DEMOCRACY UNDER A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCH.

EVEN BEFORE THE STUDENTS' REBELLION, THE AMBASSADOR SAID, THAILAND HAD BEEN MOVING TOWARD WHAT HE CALLED A "WIDENING OF THE WINDOWS, WHICH WOULD MAKE US THE FRIEND OF ALL GOVERNMENTS REGARDLESS OF THEIR IDEOLOGY OR SYSTEM."

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IN ADDITION TO THE SOVIET UNION AND YUGOSLAVIA, WITH WHICH THAILAND HAS RELATIONS OF LONG STANDING, HE SAID, HIS GOVERNMENT HAD IN THE PAST TWO YEARS ESTABLISHED RELATIONS WITH ROMANIA, HUNGARY, POLAND, EAST GERMANY, AND MONGOLIA.

THE THAI DELEGATION VISITED PEKING ON ITS WAY BACK FROM NORTH KOREA AND FOUND THE CHINESE EAGER TO DRAW UP LISTS OF

GOODS TO BE EXCHANGED, INCLUDING RUBBER AND JUTE FROM THAILAND, AND PHARMACEUTICALS AND CANNED FOODS FROM CHINA, WHICH MAY NOW BE SHIPPED DIRECTLY INSTEAD OF FOLLOWING A CIRCUITOUS ROUTE VIA HONG KONG.

WHILE OFFICIALLY DEALING WITH THE CHINA COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE, THE THAIS WERE GIVEN AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET CHINESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

AMBASSADOR PANYARACHUN SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THAIS AND CHINESE SPEAK DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, THEY CONSIDER A "BLOOD RELATIONSHIP" EXISTS BETWEEN THEM. THE THAIS MIGRATED TO THE PENINSULA THEY NOW OCCUPY IN THE 12TH AND 13 CENTURIES FROM YUNNAN.

THERE ARE ABOUT 300,000 CHINESE IN THAILAND WHO ARE OFFICIALLY REGARDED AS FOREIGNERS, BUT THERE ARE ALSO SEVERAL MILLION MORE SCATTERED THROUGH THE POPULATION OF 40 MILLION WHO HAVE ADOPTED THAI NATIONALITY AND HAVE BEEN ASSIMILATED TO A GREATER OR LESSER EXTENT. MOST ARE BUSINESSMEN, AND THEY HAVE FOR MANY YEARS DOMINATED THAILAND'S COMMERCE. END TEXT.

2. WE FIND PARAPHRASE OF ANAN'S STATEMENT, REFERENCE TO "POSSIBLE FUTURE REQUEST TO THE US AIR FORCE TO WITHDRAW ITS 27,000 MEN FROM...THAILAND" NOT INCONSISTENT WITH RTG POSITION. WE THEREFORE SUGGEST YOU NOT MAKE INQUIRIES AT MFA PER PARA 2 REFTEL. INGERSOLL

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